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Expletives, Subjects and Topics in Finnish

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1. Introduction[*]

Finnish exhibits an unusual combination of properties relating to 'the subject': (a) it is a null subject language, (b) it has obligatory expletives, (c) it is topic-prominent in the sense that the external argument need not be the subject but can be any category which can serve as the topic of the sentence. The Finnish facts to be discussed here therefore have consequences for the formulation of parameters concerning null subjects and the EPP among other things. For instance, according to the standard view of null-subjects, following Rizzi (1982, 1986), null-subject languages do not have overt expletives since any language which can license empty referential subjects will be capable of licensing empty nonreferential subjects. More recently Alexiadou and Anagnostopulou (1998) have argued that null-subject languages satisfy the EPP just by V-movement to AgrS and therefore have no need for expletives, overt or covert. Finnish shows that neither theory can be entirely correct. As shown by (1) Finnish can license a referential or a 'quasi-referential' null-subject, but not a non-referential one.

(1) a. Olen väsynyt.
be-1SG tired
'I'm tired.'
b. Sataa (vettä).
rains (water)
c. *Leikkii lapsia kadulla.
play children in-street

(2a,b,c) are well-formed variants of (1c) (EXP = expletive pronoun):

(2) a. Sitä leikkii lapsia kadulla.
EXP play children in-street

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b. Kadulla leikkii lapsia.
in-street play children
c. Lapsia leikkii kadulla.
children play in-street
‘Children are playing in the street./ There are children playing in the street.’

According to Kiss (1995, 1997) a language is topic-prominent if syntactic structure reflects topic-comment structure so that an argument is externalized if and only if it is the sentence topic. In such languages externalization of an argument (movement to a predicate-external A-position) is not required for reasons of Case or a formal EPP, but is, in a sense, semantically triggered. Consequently we do not expect to find obligatory expletive pronouns in such languages. Again Finnish shows that this cannot be the whole truth.

Multiple Subject Constructions (MSCs) have attracted some attention recently, especially following Bobaljik and Jonas (1996) and Chomsky (1995). A MSC is a construction which has more than one grammatical subject realized in VP-external positions. Finnish has two types of MSCs: One, exemplified in (3a) has an expletive pronoun in a higher position and a lexical argument DP in a lower position, where both positions are VP-external. The other, exemplified in (3b), has a seemingly referential subject pronoun in the higher position coupled with a lexical argument DP in the lower, VP-external position. In this paper we shall deal with the first type only.

(3) a. Sitä ovat nämä lapset jo oppineet uimaan.
EXP have these children already learnt to-swim
‘These children have already learnt to swim.’
b. Ne ovat ministerit ostaneet uusia autoja.
they have ministers bought new cars
‘The ministers have bought new cars.’

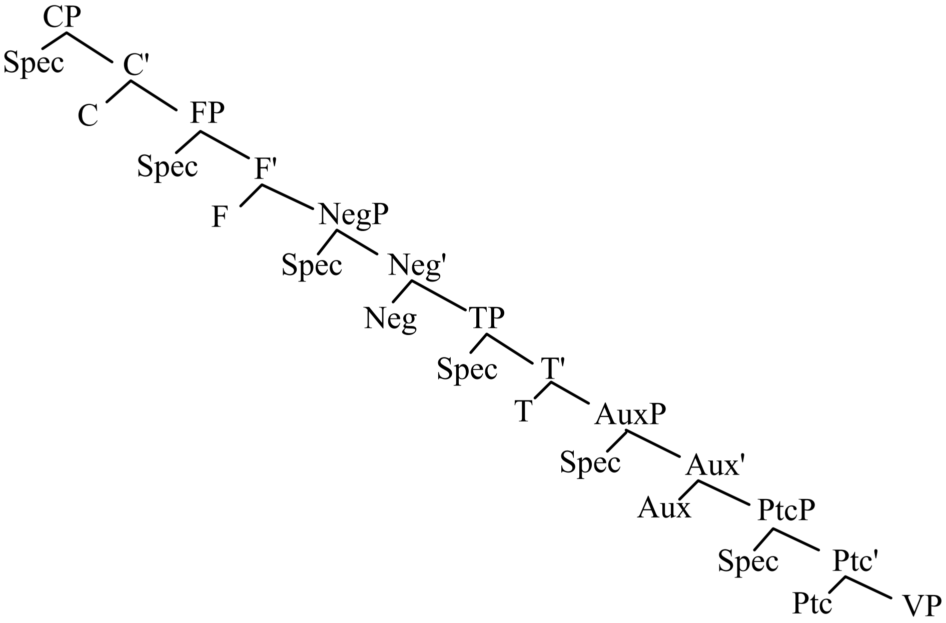
The existence of MSCs has consequences for the architecture of the sentence: How many sentential functional heads do we need to assume, and how many spec-positions? What is the status of Agr? These questions have gained new interest in the wake of Chomsky (1995, ch. 4), where the status of Agr as a head is called into question. Chomsky argues that the two specifiers of MSCs are specifiers of the same head, namely T. We will show that this is not the case in Finnish. As we will show, Finnish exhibits strong evidence that the higher of the two specifiers in the MSCs crucially occupies the spec of the sentential head bearing the subject agreement features, that is AgrS in traditional terminology, but not necessarily tense or any other inflectional features. The lower specifier, on the other hand will be shown to be in the complement of AgrS, inside what we take to be the predicate phrase. We will show, however, that the spec of the head usually hosting the subject agreement inflection, somewhat surprisingly, is not the privileged position of the subject in Finnish, but of the sentence topic, which may be for instance an object. Even 'MSC' in fact is a misnomer, since the argument which is 'multiplied' need not be the subject, but may be an object.

All non-English sentences in this paper are Finnish, unless indicated otherwise.

2. The finite clause in Finnish

(23) shows the structure of the Finnish finite clause, according to the theory of Holmberg, & al. (1993).

(4) The finite clause in Finnish



The label 'F' corresponds roughly to what is standardly called 'AgrS'. In Holmberg & al. it is mnemonic for 'finite'. The reason why they use the category label 'F' instead of 'AgrS' is, primarily, that a certain finite verb form in Finnish, namely the passive, is marked by a suffix -Vn which corresponds in terms of its morphological distribution to subject agreement (it is the outermost verbal inflection), but which is invariant, showing no agreement. According to Holmberg & al. it is a realization of finiteness, of which AgrS is another realization.[1] A further reason for preferring the label ‘F’ is that although the spec-position of the head in question is the default position for the nominative subject, other categories may fill this position, the generalization being that a category in this position, when referential, i.e. except when it is an expletive, has the discourse function of topic; this will be discussed below. That is to say, AgrS is associated with this head but is not a defining property of it. The theory we elaborate in this paper is consistent with the assumption that agreement features (phi-features) are not represented anywhere in the syntax except as part of nominal categories and the agreement inflection base-generated on the verb or other predicative head. This is not crucial, though; we may equally well assume that F is provided inherently with phi-features which are checked off in the manner sketched in Chomsky (1993).[2]

Only F and T(ense) are obligatory in the structure of the finite clause. All the other functional categories are optional. Following Holmberg & al. we assume that Mood (Potential (-*ne*-), Conditional (-*isi*-) is a feature of the category T in Finnish. Here is an example of a sentence with a maximal structure of inflectional categories; In the example structure (5) we illustrate T with the conditional form for reasons of exposition: the conditional is morphologically more visible than the indicative.

(5)

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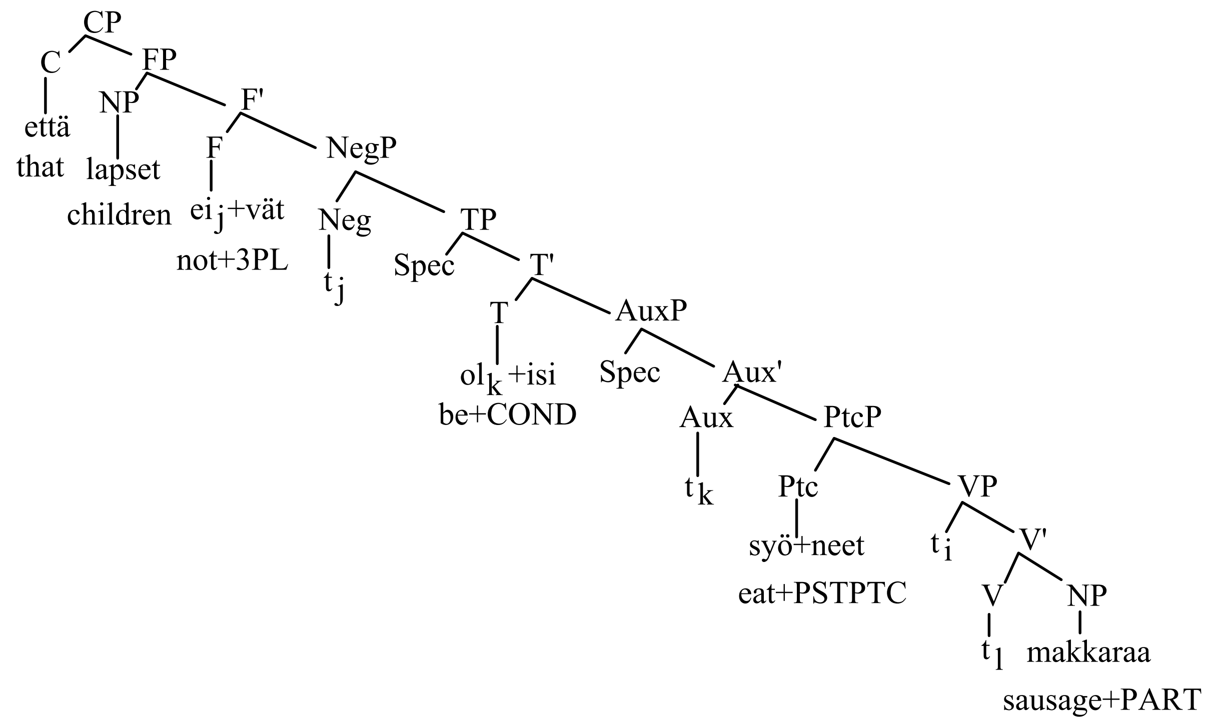
[1] The following examples illustrate the finite inflection in the passive; note that the form of the inflection does not vary according to the number, case, or any other property of the arguments of the sentence.

(i) Kirja/ kirjat/ kirjoja tila- t - i- in Englannista.
book-NOM-SG/ NOM-PL/ PART-PL order-PASS-PAST-F from-England
‘The book/the books/books were ordered from England.’

[2] Uriagereka (1995) postulates a category in Romance languages which he calls F, and which seems to correspond quite closely to the Finnish category we now call F. Although the labels are only accidentally identical, Uriagereka's 'F' being short for 'functional', this encourages us to use this label.


CP
C
että
that
FP
NP
lapset
children
F'
F
ei$_j$+vät
not+3PL
NegP
Neg
t$_j$
TP
Spec
T'
T
ol$_k$ +isi
be+COND
AuxP
Spec
Aux'
Aux
t$_k$
PtcP
Ptc
syö+neet
eat+PSTPTC
VP
t$_i$
V'
V
t$_l$
NP
makkaraa
sausage+PART

‘that (the) children wouldn’t have eaten (the) sausage’

A characteristic property of Finnish is that I is visibly split into F and T in one construction, namely negative finite sentences: The negation is inflected for subject agreement while the next head down, either the auxiliary or the main verb, is inflected for Tense and Mood. Following Mitchell (1991), Holmberg & al. (1993), we assume that Neg is merged with TP, and raises from Neg to F.

3. Subjects, topics, and the EPP in Finnish

3.1. Null subjects

We will begin by considering some parameters involving the subject, or more generally, the highest spec-positions in the sentence.

First, as well known, languages differ with regard to whether they allow null subjects. For instance Italian does, but English does not:

(6) a. Sono stanco.
am tired
b. Piove.
rains

c. É venuto un uomo della finestre.
   has come a man through-the window

The received view is that the Italian constructions above all have a small *pro* subject, licensed by AgrS. The reason why for instance English does not allow null subjects is that AgrS lacks the features required to license *pro*. Consideration of Finnish shows that this cannot be the whole truth. It shows, in particular, that a construction like (1a), featuring a null referential subject, and a construction like (1c), which according to the received view features an expletive null subject, are not licensed by the same mechanism: Finnish is a null subject language, licensing referential subject *pro* and "quasi-referential" *pro* (as in weather constructions), yet Finnish does not allow verb-initial impersonal constructions. We repeat the examples (1) and (2):

(1) a. Olen väsynyt.
   be-1SG tired
   'I'm tired.'
b. Sataa (vettä).
   rains (water)
c. *Leikkii lapsia kadulla.
   play children in-street

(2a,b,c) are well-formed variants of (1c) (EXP = expletive pronoun):

(2) a. Sitä leikkii lapsia kadulla.
   EXP play children in-street
b. Kadulla leikkii lapsia.
   in-street play children
c. Lapsia leikkii kadulla.
   children play in-street
   'Children are playing in the street./ There are children playing in the street.'

Finnish has rich subject agreement morphology, distinguishing three persons and two numbers in (almost) all tenses and moods. It seems clear enough that the null subject in (2a) is licensed by virtue of the features of AgrS. Yet these features apparently do not help in the case of (2c).

A possible objection at this point is that Finnish is not a full null-subject language, since 3rd person referential pronouns cannot be freely dropped. Consider the paradigm in (7): the pronouns are optional in 1st and 2nd persons, but obligatory in the 3rd persons.

(7) (Minä) ol-i-n väsynyt. (Me) ol-i-mme väsyneitä.
I be-PAST-1SG tired we be-PAST-1PL tired-PL
(Sinä) ol-i-t väsynyt. (Te) ol-i-tte väsyneitä.
thou be-PAST-2SG tired you be-PAST-2PL tired-PL
Hän ol-i-Ø väsynyt. He ol-i-vat väsyneitä.
he/she be-PAST-3SG tired they be-PAST-3PL tired-PL

This does not, however, explain why the overt expletive is required in (1c): Note that the subject pronoun in construction with the weather-verb in (1c) can be null. In colloquial Finnish the pronoun can optionally be overt:[3]

(8) Nyt (se) taas sataa.
now (it) again rains
"Now it's raining again."

This is also true of the pronoun in construction with an extraposed sentence: it is only optionally overt.

(9) (Se) oli hauskaa että tulit käymään.
it was nice that (you) came visiting

The weather pronoun is arguably not expletive in the same sense as the pronoun in existential and ergative constructions (the weather-pronoun is sometimes characterized as 'quasi-referential'). As for the extraposition pronoun, it is generally agreed that it is referential (cf. Bennis (1985)). It may still be the case that the weather pronoun and the extraposition pronoun are both somehow defective, lacking some specification(s) that standard referential pronouns have. Rizzi (1986) suggests that they have number but not person. Assume that it is rather the other way around: the weather pronoun and the extraposition pronoun have specification for person, with the default value

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[3] The form of the expletive in (2a) is *sitä*, which is the partitive form of the 3rd person singular non-human pronoun, while the form in the weather expression (8) is *se*, which is the nominative form of the same pronoun, or *sitä*. The extraposition pronoun can only be *se*. In the text below we will argue that the form *sitä* is a default syntactically caseless form, while *se* is nominative.

3, but not number. If we then postulate that Finnish 3 person AgrS is not specified for number, it follows that it can identify a null numberless 3. person pronoun, i.e. the null extraposition pronoun or a null weather pronoun, but not an ordinary referential pronoun specified for person and number. This hypothesis can be supported by the observation that in spoken Finnish verb agreement does not distinguish morphologically between 3. person singular and 3. person plural (the 3SG form in (7) is used for both).[4] Now if Finnish AgrS can license a null pronoun as long as it is not marked for number, there is no reason, within a theory along the lines of Rizzi (1986), why it should not license a null expletive in existential, ergative, impersonal passive, and other constructions.

Furthermore, there is another language which displays the same partial referential pro drop as Finnish, namely Hebrew; see Shlonsky (1988). But unlike Finnish, Hebrew has no expletive pronouns. So apparently the Finnish-Hebrew type of partial pro drop does not necessarily correlate with overt expletives.

In conclusion, the fact that Finnish is only ‘partially pro-drop’ does not explain why it cannot license a null expletive pronoun in (1c), assuming that null expletive pronouns exist.

In a recent paper Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1996) (henceforth A&A) present another theory of null subjects and the EPP, according to which
(a) EPP is universal: a strong D-feature in I (following Chomsky 1995: ch. 4);
(b) In some languages the AgrS-features on the finite verb are nominal enough to check the EPP-feature. In these languages V-movement to I is sufficient to satisfy the EPP. In other languages either a nominal argument must move to specIP, or a nominal expletive must be inserted there, to check the EPP feature.

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[4] Furthermore, Finnish has pronouns which are clearly specified for number but not person, namely the pronouns in the MSC which we call the Split Subject Construction, exemplified in (3b). The contrast between (i) (= 3b) and (ii) shows that the pronoun is marked for number. The contrast between (ii) and (iii) shows that it is not marked for person.

(i) Ne ovat ministerit ostaneet uusia autoja.
they have-3PL ministers bought new cars
(ii) Se on Jussi käynyt monta kertaa Pariisissa.
it have-3SG Jussi been many times in-Paris
(iii) Se olen minäkin käynyt monta kertsaa Pariisissa.
it have-1SG me-too been many times in-Paris

This pronoun does not seem to have a null counterpart:

(iv) (*)On Jussi käynyt monta kertaa Pariisissa.
has Jussi been many times in Paris

This expression is grammatical only with the verb focus reading (roughly “Jussi HAS been...”) derived by V-movement to C; see text below.

(c) Null Subject languages (NSLs) have subject agreement features which can check the EPP feature. This is why they do not have overt expletives. A&A argue that they do not have covert expletives either.

(d) Since A-movement to specIP is not needed in NSLs, they have no such movement: Instead, all movement to preverbal position is A-bar-movement. More precisely, A&A argue that preverbal arguments in finite clauses are left-dislocated in the languages they discuss.

Their theory of NSLs is empirically supported mainly with data from Greek and Spanish, but other languages are discussed as well. The theory makes the same prediction as Rizzi's (1986) theory: NSLs do not have expletives. As shown above, the prediction fails in the case of Finnish: Finnish has rich subject agreement morphology, with overt obligatory movement of the head bearing the agreement features to I where the features are capable of licensing a null referential or quasi-referential subject, yet Finnish does not allow verb-initial impersonal sentences as in (1c).

Matters are complicated by the fact that Finnish does allow some verb initial impersonal sentences. The following are some examples:

(10) a. Sattui onnettomuus.
occurred (an) accident
b. On ilmennyt ongelmia.
Have appeared problems
c. Tuli kiire.
came haste
"One is in a hurry."

In these examples the expletive *sitä* is optional. We will return to these examples below, showing what it is that distinguishes them from the (more common) cases where an expletive is obligatory. At this point, just note that in terms of A&A, V-movement is sufficient to "check the D-feature in I" in Finnish, judging from examples like (10), but this does not eliminate the need for an overt expletive in other cases.

This indicates that there are at least two distinct parameters involved, or, in terms of checking theory, two distinct features: There is one feature which requires nominal features in specIP or in I; this feature can be checked by nominal features on a verb moved to I, and arguably correlates with the NS-property. But there is also another feature, active in some languages but not others, which requires the filling of specIP, and which is not checked by features of the finite verb moved to I. In the following we will try to flesh out this hypothesis. But first we need to discuss some additional parameters which also concern the subject position, broadly speaking.

Subject vs. topic-prominent languages

The distinction between "subject-prominent" and "topic-prominent" languages has been discussed in the literature in various frameworks and in relation to various languages; see Kiss (1995, 1997, this volume) for some recent discussion. A language is subject-prominent when the argument which is externalized in an active sentence is always the subject in the sense of the thematically highest argument in VP.[5] A language is topic-prominent when the argument which is externalized need not be the subject, but can be any category capable of functioning as topic. English is generally taken as the perfect representative of subject-prominent languages, while representatives of topic-prominent languages include Chinese (Li and Thompson 1977), Tagalog and related languages (Guilfoyle, Hung, and Travis 1992), and Hungarian (Kiss 1995, 1997, this volume). Greek and Spanish discussed by A&A presumably also qualify as topic-prominent languages in this sense. Consider the following sentences:

(11) a. Graham Greene has written this book.
b. *This book has written Graham Greene.

(12) a. Graham Greene on kirjoittanut tämän kirjan. (Finnish)
Graham Greene has written this book
b. Tämän kirjan on kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
this book has written Graham Greene

The word order in (12b), an active construction, is perfectly grammatical in Finnish but sharply ungrammatical in English (if Graham Greene is the author). The closest English translation of (12b) is the passive (13)

(13) This book is written by Graham Greene.

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[5] If there is an Agent, it is always the highest argument in the VP; that much is uncontroversial. With regard to the rest of the thematic hierarchy and its syntactic projection there is more disagreement (cf. Speas 1990). The following is a more cautious definition of subject-prominence: A language where the externalized argument in an active sentence containing an Agent can only be the Agent is subject-prominent.

The passive is the standard way of externalizing a non-subject topic in English and other subject-prominent languages. (12b) may be used in any situation where the book has been previously introduced in the discourse while the identity of the author is new information. Consider, for example, a situation where a teacher is sitting with a stack of books in front of him, presenting one book at a time, telling the students facts about the author. Taking a new book from the stack holding it up to the students, the teacher might utter (12b). In this situation the existence of the book is old information, while Graham Greene's role in the depicted event is new information; cf. Vallduví and Engdahl (1995). In this situation the passive (13) would be the preferred word order in English, while (12b) would be the preferred order in Finnish. The possibility of expressing this meaning with an active construction structured basically as in (12b), the object c-commanding the subject, is characteristic of topic-prominent languages, as we see it. By this test, for instance French is subject-prominent, while Russian is topic-prominent. [6]

(14) *Ce livre a écrit Graham Greene. (French)
this book has written Graham Greene
(15) Etu knigu napisal Graham Greene. (Russian)
this book has-written Graham Greene

As an informal characterization, the topic is the sentence constituent which refers to the entity which the sentence is about; cf. Kiss (1995, 1997, this volume). Therefore typically it has specific reference. The most prototypical topic, therefore, is an unstressed definite pronoun.

3.3. Two triggers for externalization

The following is a formal account of the variation discussed in the two preceding sections:
First, we assume that arguments are all provided with a feature [±Foc], which is either inherent (e.g. weak pronouns and clitics are inherently [-Foc]) or assigned to the argument when it is merged with a syntactic tree. The semantic effect of the feature [+Foc] is that the argument is interpreted as the

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[6] Obviously, care must be taken when applying this crude test . For instance, this particular order may be ruled out for independent reasons even in a topic-prominent language (for instance if it is strictly verb-final). Or the order may be coincidentally permitted in a subject-prominent language, but with another interpretation, as in the Swedish sentence (i):
(i) Den här boken skrev Graham Greene när han var tjugofem år.
this book wrote Graham Greene when he was twenty-five.
In this case the order is a result of object movement to specCP, V-movement to C (Swedish being a V2 language), and subject movement to specIP. On the most natural reading *Graham Greene* does not represent new information here, but part of the old information.

information focus, in the sense of Vallduví and Engdahl (1996). The semantic effect of the feature [-Foc] is that the argument is interpreted as part of the presupposition, or 'ground' (cf. Vallduví and Engdahl 1995).[7] There may be distinctions among the [-Foc]-marked arguments in terms of salience or foregrounding etc., but we disregard such differences here.

Second, we assume that a feature [-Foc] must move to a position outside the predicate phrase. The feature [–Foc] is an uninterpretable feature, in the sense of Chomsky (1995: ch. 4). As such it must be checked and thereby eliminated before LF.[8] The feature is checked by a feature of F, the 'EPP-feature'. In addition to the EPP, checking [–Foc] is presumably also crucial in processes such as Scrambling and Object Shift (cf. Holmberg 1997b), however, in this work we will consider only EPP-related [–Foc]-movement. Broadly following Diesing (1991) we assume that the sentence is divided in three domains: The focus domain, the presupposition domain, and the operator domain. In Diesing (1991) the focus domain is VP. We assume it is TP, the maximal projection of the predicate (cf. also Kiss 1996); this will be substantiated below. The presupposition domain is then FP, while the operator domain is CP. Arguments are merged in VP, where they receive their thematic roles etc., but arguments which are not part of the information focus must ultimately be moved out of the focus domain. This idea has been implemented in various ways in the literature: We do it here in terms of movement of the postulated feature [-Foc], attracted by a feature in F.

Adopting in essence the theory of movement in Chomsky (1995: ch. 4) we assume that syntactic features can be interpretable or uninterpretable. The uninterpretable features have to be checked, and thereby eliminated before the LF-interface. This is the mechanism which drives some or even all syntactic movement. Furthermore, movement affects specifically features. A feature selected for movement may move alone, or it may pied-pipe other features. If the phonological features are among the features pied/piped, we have a case of overt movement. If not, the movement is covert (cf. also Bobaljik 1995, Groat & O'Neil 1996).

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[7] Contrastiveness is a different feature; an argument can be [-Foc] and yet be contrastive. In the construction (i)

(i) John, I like (but I can't stand his wife).

John is (normally) [-Foc], that is part opf the presupposition, but contrastive. On the syntax of contrastiveness in Finnish, see Vilkuna (1995) and the text below.

[8] A logical possibility is that there is an unmarked value of [Foc] in addition to + and -. We do not , however, make use of this possibility. An argument is either [+Foc] or [-Foc], where in the latter case you have to do something with it in the syntax, to eliminate the [-Foc] feature. In this sense [+Foc] represents the unmarked case in the theory assumed here.

The feature [-Foc] is uninterpretable, and as such must be checked. The checker is a feature of F, which we will henceforth refer to as the EPP-feature. This feature is also uninterpretable, and hence must also be eliminated in the course of the syntactic derivation. We assume that this feature attracts **all** [-F] features in its domain to F.[9] Languages vary with regard to whether [-Foc]-movement is overt or not, i.e. whether [-Foc] does or does not pied pipe other features, specifically the phonological features of the category dominating it. In Finnish the EPP–feature is 'strong' in the sense that it can only be eliminated by a phonologically visible category, in fact, only by a phrasal category. Consequently one of the moved [-Foc] features must move overtly, i.e. it must pied-pipe the minimal maximal category dominating it, with its phonological matrix, to specFP. Given the overarching economy principle according to which movement should be restricted to a minimum, which in terms of feature-movement theory means that as few features as possible should move (cf. Chomsky 1995: ch. 4), only one of the moved [Foc]-features can pied-pipe anything. We thus derive the result that in Finnish sentences with one or more [-Foc]-marked categories, one and only one of these categories will move overtly to specFP. In a language where the EPP-feature is weak (in the sense of Chomsky (1995: ch. 4) all [-Foc]-movement will be covert. Note the analogy wh-movement: As well known, languages differ with regard to whether wh-movement is overt or not. One way of expressing formally this variation is to assume that wh-phrases have a wh-feature which is attracted by an uninterpretable WH-feature in C, which, as in the case of the -Foc feature just discussed, attracts all the wh-features in its domain. The cross-linguistic variation is due to whether WH in C is strong or not, i.e. whether it can only be checked by an overt category. If it is strong, one of the attracted features must pied-pipe its category with a phonological matrix, if weak, all wh-movement can be covert.[10]

So movement of [-Foc] out of VP is one of the mechanisms behind externalization of arguments. There are other mechanisms, however: To begin with, there is a feature in I which is checked by an overt nominative category. We leave open at this point whether the feature is properly located in T, F, or even in C. We will discuss this matter in some detail in subsequent sections, but in the present section we shall refer to it simply as IP. In Holmberg and Platzack (1995) the feature is identified as a finiteness feature, present in finite clauses only. They argue that the feature in question can be checked either by a nominative DP moved to, or (in the case of expletive pronouns) inserted in specIP, or by AgrS. The latter is possible in languages where AgrS counts the feature [nominative] among its features, typically in null-subject languages and certain other languages with morphologically rich AgrS (for instance Icelandic). Note that this feature is similar to the [D]-feature postulated by A&A: a feature of I checked either by a DP in specIP or a verb in I with nominal agreement features.[11] Let us regard the relevant feature as a nominative Case feature of I. The feature triggers movement of the finite verb to I in languages with rich enough subject agreement morphology. It triggers movement of a nominative DP to specIP in languages where subject agreement is not rich enough, lacking a nominative feature in particular. Alternatively, it triggers insertion of a nominative expletive in specIP. This accounts, in part, for the distinction between subject and topic-prominent languages. In for instance English the nominative Case feature is not checked by the finite verb, which entails that an overt nominative DP must move to specIP, regardless of the value of its focus feature. Alternatively an expletive pronoun is inserted in specIP. Consequently no non-subject argument will ever get a chance of moving to specIP.[12]

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[9] Cf. Miyagawa's (1998) 'feature uniformity'.

[10] There are also languages where all wh-movement is overt: the Slavic languages. We do not know whether there are languages where all [-Foc]-movement is overt. We predict that there could be, though.

The scenario depicted above is almost certainly too simple to account for all the variation found among the languages of the world regarding the EPP (loosely speaking). To begin with, the appearance of an expletive pronoun in English infinitival clauses is not predicted by the theory outlined so far:[13]

(16) I believe *(there) to be a dead man in the cellar.

Second, there are languages where V has agreement features which can check [D] in I but where nevertheless a non-subject argument cannot in general move to specIP across the subject. Third, Scandinavian Stylistic Fronting (see Holmberg 1997a) shows that there is variation among the languages where [D] is checked by the finite verb regarding what categories can satisfy the EPP. Scandinavian Stylistic Fronting is an operation which fills specIP with an overt category in constructions where that position is not filled by the subject, namely, in subject relatives, embedded subject questions, and various impersonal constructions. As discussed by Holmberg (1997a) the filler can be virtually any category, head or phrase. In Finnish, the generalization seems to be that the EPP can be satisfied only by categories which are referential in a broad sense, including locative and temporal adverbials, but excluding sentence adverbials and manner adverbials.

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[11] Holmberg and Platzack (1995) argue that the feature is actually located in C in some languages (notably V2 languages), but in I in other languages.

[12] Although even English has a somewhat marginal non-subject topic construction, namely Locative Inversion: *Into the bar strolled three drunken sailors*.

[13] But cf. Martin (1997). The presence of *there* would follow if the matrix verb has a Case-feature which is uninterpretable, hence has to be checked. The question is whether this holds true of all predicates selecting a sentential complement in the manner of *believe*. Martin (1997) argues that it does.

(17) a. Tänään leikkii lapsia kadulla.
today play children in-street
b. Tromssassa leikkii lapsia kadulla.
in-Tromsø play children in-street
c. Kirveen avulla murtautuu helposti taloon.
axe.GEN with-help break easily into-house
'One can easily break into the house with the help of an axe.'
d. *Ehkä leikkii lapsia kadulla.
perhaps play children in-street
e. *Helposti murtautuu taloon kirveen avulla.
easily break into-house axe.GEN with-help

In addition, the EPP can be satisfied by an expletive, *se* or *sitä*. Note that referential small*pro* also can check the EPP-feature. This is shown by the fact that the expletive cannot co-occur with a referential null-subject:

(18) Miksi (*sitä) leikitte kadulla?
why EXP play-2PL on-street
"Why are you playing in the street?"

Although specIP is phonetically empty in (18), the EPP-feature is, apparently, checked, since the expletive is not needed to check it (and therefore is excluded by the principle of Full Interpretation). We have opted for postulation of a feature [-Foc] as the 'EPP-feature' in Finnish.

3.4. Verb-initial sentences in Finnish

As mentioned Finnish does exhibit certain V-initial impersonal constructions. They complicate the scenario sketched in the preceding section in an interesting way.

(19) a. On ilmennyt ongelmia.
have appeared problems
b. Sattui onnettomuus.
occurred (an) accident
c. Tuli kiire.

came haste
"We/they are in a hurry."
d. Sataa vettä.
rains water
e. Oli hauskaa että tulit käymään.
was nice that came-2SG visiting
"It was nice that you came by."

In these constructions the expletive *sitä* is optional, except in (19e), where the subject pronoun, if there is one, must be *se* (the nominative form of 'it'). Compare these with (20), all of which require either that an argument is moved to sentence-initial position, or that the expletive *sitä* is added.

(20) a. *On leikkinyt lapsia kadulla.
have played children on-street
b. *Astui mies huoneeseen.
entered man into-room
c. *Käyvät monet eläkeläiset päivittäin uimassa.
go many pensioners daily swimming

Concerning (19) note the following generalizations: First, if a locative, goal, or other argument is added to the sentence, the result is generally bad, unless the added argument is moved to initial position.

(21) a. *Ilmeni ongelmia pian.
appeared problems soon
b. Pian ilmeni ongelmia.
(22) a. *Sattui onnettomuus minulle.
occurred accident to-me
b. Minulle saatui onnettomuus.
(23) a. *Tuli kiire sille.
came haste to-him
b. Sille tuli kiire.
(24) a. *Sataa vettä nyt.
rains water now

b. Nyt sataa vettä.
(25) a. *Oli hauskaa minusta että tulit käymään.
was nice I-ABL that came-2SG visiting
b. Minusta oli hauskaa että tulit käymään.
‘I thought it was nice that you came by.’

Second, although the constructions in (19) contain a complement, that complement cannot move to sentence initial position:

(26) a. *Ongelmia ilmeni.
problems appeared
b. *Onnettomuus sattui.
(an) accident occurred
c. *Kiire tuli.
haste came
d. *Vettä sataa.[14]
water rains
e. *Että tulit käymään oli hauskaa.
that came-2SG visiting was nice

The generalization is: A V-initial sentence is allowed in Finnish just in those cases where the sentence does not contain a category which can move to preverbal position (a ‘potential topic’). As noted in the previous section, this confirms that V-movement alone is capable of checking the Case-feature of I.The following stipulation will go a long way towards explaining this generalization:

(27) The EPP-feature in F is optional in Finnish.

Consider what happens if F is merged without the EPP-feature: The sentences in (19) will not violate the EPP. The argument, if there is one, is [+Foc], and therefore need not move. Apart from (19e) the sentences all assert the coming into existence of a phenomenon, so a presuppositional reading of the argument is out of the question. As for (19e), it may be the case that clausal complements are inherently [+Foc]. Now what happens if an additional argument (in the wide sense) is added, as in (21)-(25)? Recall that all arguments have to be supplied with a [-Foc] or a [+Foc] feature. Assume that at at most one argument can be [+Foc]. If so, the added argument has a [-Foc] feature which must be checked. But if F is merged without the EPP-feature, the [-Foc] feature cannot be checked, and the derivation crashes at LF, on a account of containing an uninterpretable feature. This is why the (a)-sentences in (21)-(25) are starred under the no-EPP-feature option. For the same reason the sentences in (20) are starred. The sentences in (26) are also starred, but for a different reason: they violate the last resort condition on movement (Chomsky 1993, 1995): The [+Foc] arguments have moved although there is no movement trigger.

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[14] This word order is fine if another predicate is added, for instance
(i) Vettä sataa kaatamalla.
water rains by-pouring
“It’s pouring down with rain.”

Consider what happens if F is merged with the EPP-feature. The sentences in (19) are ruled out: the derivation crashes due to an unchecked uninterpretable feature. Merging an expletive will save the derivation. As mentioned, an expletive (*sitä* in (19a-d), *se* in (19e)) is optional in these constructions. The (a)-sentences in (21)-(25) are also ruled out, now containing two unchecked uninterpretable features: the EPP feature and the [-Foc] feature of the complement. The same is true of (20). The (b)-sentences of (21)-(25) are well formed, the [-Foc] feature of the fronted argument and the EPP-feature both erased as a result of overt movement of the argument to specFP. The sentences in (26) are ruled out with or without an EPP-feature: a [+Foc] argument cannot check the EPP-feature.[15]

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[15] Obviously, admitting the possibility that the EPP can be optional entails a weakening of the theory. An anonymous referee suggests that the verb-initial sentences represent the case when T/MP itself (or possibly some lower sentential projection) is marked [-Foc], and consequently moves to specFP. Semantically it makes sense: Those sentences are not about somebody or something, but about the event or state itself, depicted by T/MP. Attractive though the idea is, we cannot think of any empirical support for it. The prediction is that categories which are normally situated between T/MP and FP should appear in sentence final position, in verb-initial impersonal sentences. An obvious candidate is the negation. As shown by the following examples, the prediction fails.

(i) *Ole ilmennyt ongelmia ei.
have appeared problems Neg
(ii) Ei ole ilmennyt ongelmia
Neg have appeared problems
(iii) *Tullut kiirettä ei.
come haste Neg
(iv) Ei tullut kiirettä.
Neg come haste

The negation is invariably the initial constituent in such cases. Likewise modal adverbs, which in the unmarked case appear between the finite verb or auxiliary and the nonfinite verb, that is between F and T/M, do not appear sentence-finally in verb-initial sentences.

(iv) *On sattunut onnettomuus kai.

4. The topic position is specFP

As mentioned in section 3.3, we claim that subject and nonsubject topics land in the same position in Finnish. In this section we will argue that the position in question is specFP. Consider again the two alternative ways of saying in Finnish that the writer of this book is Graham Greene.

(28) a. Graham Greene on kirjoittanut tämän kirjan.
Graham Greene has written this book
b. Tämän kirjan on kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
this book has written Graham Greene

Let us first assume that the structure of (28a) is (29):

(29) [$_{FP}$ Graham Greene.$_{i}$ [$_{F'}$ on$_{j}$ [$_{TP}$ t$_{i}$ [$_{T'}$ t$_{j}$ [$_{AuxP}$ t$_{j}$ [$_{PrtP}$ kirjoittanut$_{k}$ [$_{VP}$ t$_{i}$ [$_{V'}$ t$_{k}$ tämän kirjan]]]]]]

This should be uncontroversial as far as the position of the subject goes: it has moved to the highest position in the IP-domain, arguably via specTP. We now claim that (28b) has the structure (30):

(30) [FP [tämän kirjan]$_{i}$ [F’ on$_{j}$ [TP t$_{i}$ [T’ t$_{j}$ [AuxP t$_{j}$ [PrtP kirjoittanut$_{k}$ [VP Graham Greene. [V’ t$_{j}$ t$_{i}$]]]]]]

In the following we will argue specifically that the final landing site of the fronted object in (28b) is the same as that of the fronted subject in (28a). In section 6.2 we will show that the subject may occur in a lower VP-external position in the so called MSC, and that likewise the object, when externalized, may occur in this position. This lends support to the general view that the subject has no privileged status with regard to the EPP in Finnish.

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has occured accident presumably
(v) On kai sattunut onnettomuus.
has presumably occurred accident
As illustrated by (v), such adverbs occur between the finite auxiliary and the nonfinite portion of the sentence in verb-initial sentences, too, consistent with the analysis that those sentences are derived by the same movements as personal finite sentences, including movement of the finite verb, auxiliary, or negation to F, but without movement of an argument to specFP, or insertion of an expletive in specFP.

Consider what the alternatives are to the hypothesis that the topicalized object in (28b) is in specFP:

A. It is in specCP;

B. It is between specCP and specFP (e.g. adjoined to FP).

C. It is lower than specFP;

The following facts rule out alternative A:

(a) as noted, a phrase in specCP is contrastive, but the topicalized object in (28b) need not be contrastive any more than the subject does in (28a).

(b) A subject topic can occur embedded, preceded by a complementizer. This holds true of object topics, too.

(31) a. Se että Graham Greene on kirjoittanut tämän kirjan, ei merkitse että se olisi helppo lukea.
it that Graham Greene has written this book not means that it be-COND easy read-INF
"The fact that Graham Greene has written this book does not mean that it's easy to read."
b. Se että tämän kirjan on kirjoittanut Graham Greene, ei merkitse että se olisi helppo lukea.
it that this book has written Graham Greene not means that it be-COND easy read-INF
"The fact that this book is written by Graham Greene..."

(c) The topic, subject or object, can be preceded by the finite head when that head is focused by movement to C, as typically in yes-no questions, where the head is affixed with a question particle:

(32) a. Onko Graham Greene tosiaan kirjoittanut tämän kirjan?
has-Q Graham Greene really written this book
"Has Graham Greene really written this book?"
b. Onko tämän kirjan tosiaan kirjoittanut Graham Greene?
has-Q this book really written Graham Greene
"Is this book really written by Graham Greene?"

The following fact speaks against alternative B (the topic is between C and the subject): A non-subject topic phrase cannot precede the subject in the initial portion of the sentence, when we control for the possibility that the non-subject phrase is in specCP.

(33) Miksi (*tätä kirjaa) Graham Greene (tätä kirjaa) ei (tätä kirjaa) olisi (tätä kirjaa) voinut (tätä
why this book Graham Greene not have-COND been-able-to

kirjaa) kirjoittaa (tätä kirjaa)?
write
"Why could Graham Greene not have written this book?"

The freedom of placement that the object enjoys in this construction is due to the possibility of scrambling verb complements in sentences which have a filled specCP (to be discussed below). As can be seen, the object may scramble leftwards all the way up to, but not past the subject, if the subject is a topic (i.e. if it does not remain in VP with focus): there is no place for the object between the subject in specFP and specCP.[16]

The following fact speaks against alternative C (the non-subject topic is lower than the subject): A subject topic precedes the highest head in IP, that is F, the head bearing subject agreement (i.e. either the negation, the auxiliary, or the finite verb) except if F is moved to C. Movement of F to C is always accompanied by some form of focus on the head, realized as a focus particle or as contrastive intonation.

(34) a. Ilmeisesti Graham Greene on kirjoittanut tämän kirjan.
evidently Graham Greene has written this book
b. On Graham Greene kirjoittanut tämän kirjan.
has Graham Greene written this book
"Surely Graham Greene has written this book."
c. *Ilmeisesti on Graham Greene kirjoittanut tämän kirjan.
evidently has Graham Greene written this book

In (34c) the auxiliary cannot have a focused reading. This follows if (a) a focused auxiliary must move to C, and (b) the adverb cannot be adjoined higher than to FP (as is generally the case in Finnish; cf. Holmberg 1997c). The example thus shows that the finite, AgrS-bearing head H can precede the subject if and only if H is in C. The same holds true of the non-subject topic.

(35) a. Ilmeisesti tämän kirjan on kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
evidently this book has written Graham Greene
b. On tämän kirjan kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
has this book written Graham Greene

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[16] This is a reflection of the generalization that Finnish allows only one fronted topic per sentence.

"Surely this book is written by Graham Greene."

c. *Ilmeisesti on tämän kirjan kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
evidently has this book written Graham Greene

We conclude that the topic position in Finnish is specFP, whether the topic is a subject or not. Below we will show that the subject may occur in other positions, too, below F but preceding VP, namely when specFP is filled by an expletive. We will show that, again, this holds not only for subjects but for other sentence constituents, too, which can function as topics.

5. Differences between subject and nonsubject topics

What we have established at this point is that the non-subject topic occupies the same structural position as the subject topic, namely specFP. In certain other respects the non-subject topic does not behave like a subject, though. Thus, with regard to case, agreement, binding and reconstruction subjects and non-subjects are distinct, whether they are topics or not.

Consider first case: We have already seen several examples illustrating the fact that an object topic retains objective case (usually accusative or partitive), while the subject left behind in VP has nominative case; see for instance (1b). The generalization is that an object topic always bears the case that is assigned to it (or checked) downstairs. Consider (36): The verb *pitää* 'hold, like' selects ablative case. (36b) shows that this case is preserved under fronting to topic position.

(36) a. Lapset pitävät tästä kirjasta.
children like this book-ABL
b. Tästä kirjasta pitävät lapset.

Consider (37): In Finnish an object in the scope of negation gets partitive case. (37b) shows that the partitive case is retained under fronting to topic position, while the subject which is left behind in VP, hence presumably c-commanded by negation, is nominative, unaffected by negation.

(37) a. Graham Greene ei ole kirjoittanut tätä kirjaa/*tämän kirjan.
Graham Greene-NOM not has written this book-PART/this book-ACC
b. Tätä kirjaa ei ole kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
this book-PART not has written Graham Greene-NOM

Consider agreement: Example (38) shows that the nominative subject, regardless of its position, triggers verb agreement. A non-subject topic never triggers verb agreement.

(38) Tämän kirjan ovat lukeneet monet opiskelijat.
this book-SG-ACC have-PL read-PL many students-PL-NOM

Consider binding: Example (39) shows that a non-subject topic cannot control anaphora:

(39) a. Myöhemmin ehdottaja hylkäsi ehdotustaan.
later proposer abandoned proposal-POSS-3
"Later the proposer abandoned his proposal."
b. Myöhemmin ehdotusta hylkäsi sen ehdottaja/ *ehdottajansa.
later proposal abandoned its proposer/ proposer-POSS-3

The Finnish 3rd person possessive suffix (*-nsa* or *-Vn*) is an anaphor, essentially falling under Principle A of the Binding Theory (see Trosterud 1993). As shown by (39b) the object cannot bind an anaphor in the subject even though the object in this construction is (by hypothesis) in specFP and the subject in specVP, so that the structural conditions required by Principle A are met.

Finally, consider reconstruction:

(40) a. Ilmeisesti itseään äänesti vain Jussi.
apparently for-himself voted only Jussi
"Apparently the only person who voted for himself was Jussi."
b. Anna on hukannut kenkänsä, Liisa on hukannut kenkänsä, ja nyt kenkänsä
Anna has lost shoes-POSS-3, Liisa has lost shoes-POSS-3, and now shoes-POSS-3
on hukannut Arnekin.
has lost Arne-too
"Anna has lost her shoes, Liisa has lost her shoes, and now Arne, too, has lost his shoes."

The fronted object in (40a) is the reflexive pronoun *itse* 'self' plus a possessive suffix. Given standard binding theory, the object must be reconstructed for binding to be possible. The same holds true of the object with a possessive suffix in (40b). The sentence-initial adverbial rules out an analysis where the object is fronted to specCP (which is furthermore confirmed by the noncontrastive interpretation of the object in both cases).

We seem to be led to the conclusion that the object topic heads an A-bar chain from specFP; the properties listed above as characteristic of object topics are shared by fronted wh-phrases or constituents fronted to specCP for contrast. On the other hand, when the subject topic occupies specFP it exhibits all the signs of heading an A-chain: its case and agreement features are checked in this position, it binds anaphora, and is not subject to reconstruction.[17] If so, SpecFP is a "mixed position": an A-position when filled by the subject, but an A-bar position when filled by a non-subject. The notion that there are positions which are open as regards A/A-bar status has been proposed for various languages; cf. Diesing (1990), Rögnvaldsson and Thráinsson (1990), Rizzi (1991), among others.

On the other hand, even when filled by a non-subject, specFP has certain properties which are not characteristic of A-bar positions: For one thing, it does not interfere with canonical A-bar movement to specCP. Consider (41):

(41) Kuka tämän kirjan on kirjoittanut?
who this book has written
"(What about this book:) Who has written this book?"

The initial wh-phrase is in SpecCP, uncontroversially an A-bar position, as a result of movement. If the object topic is in specFP and if specFP is an A-bar-position, we predict, on fairly standard assumptions, that the construction should be ungrammatical due to a violation of Relativized

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[17] In fact it is hard to demonstrate that the subject ever binds anaphora from its derived position. A sentence such as (i) would appear to require binding of the anaphoric possessive suffix from the derived subject position.

(i) Pekka$_i$ ei tietääkseen ole koskaan [VP t$_i$ nähnyt elävää lehmää].
Pekka not knowing-POSS-3 has ever seen live cow
"As far as he knows, Pekka has never seen a live cow."

But there is another possibility: The possessive anaphor is bound not by the subject itself, but by AgrS. In (ii) this is, indeed, the only possibility:

(ii) Itseään äänesti tietääkseen vain Jussi.
on-himself voted knowing-POSS-3 only Jussi
"As far as he (i.e. Jussi) knows, only Jussi voted for himself."

Here the topic is itself an anaphor, and is therefore reconstructed. Hence the only binder of the possessive suffix is AgrS, i.e. the inflection on the verb. Yet another possibility is that the possessive anaphor in the participial adverbial is bound by a phrase-internal *pro*. However, in that case this *pro* itself falls under Principle A; cf. Trosterud (1993).

Minimality. There is a slight problem, though, in that the construction may be derived by scrambling of the object to some lower VP-external position, rather than fronting it to specFP. As mentioned earlier, scrambling is always an option when specCP is filled. Consider for instance (42): SpecCP is filled by a wh-phrase, SpecFP is occupied by the subject, and the locative complement may optionally scramble to a lower preverbal position, either preceding the auxiliary or between the auxiliary and the main verb.

(42) Milloin Marja (Pariisissa) on (Pariisissa) käynyt (Pariisissa)?
when Marja (in-Paris) has (in-Paris) been (in-Paris)
"When has Marja been to Paris?"

However, the position preceding the negation is too distant for Scrambling; as discussed in section 4, the position immediately preceding the negation is unambiguously specFP. Consequently, in (43), we can be reasonably certain that the object is in specFP, still no Relativized Minimality effect can be discerned.

(43) a. Miksi pihalla ei leiki lapsia?
why on-yard not play children
"Why aren't there children playing in the yard?"
b. Kuka minusta ei pidä?
who me not like
"Who doesn't like me?"

Another property which the non-subject topic has which is unexpected if it heads an A-bar chain is that it can control a floated subject quantifier.

(44) a. Ilmeisesti kriitikot ovat (kaikki) ylistäneet tätä kirjaa.
evidently the critics have all praised this book
b. Ilmeisesti nämä kirjat on (kaikki) kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
evidently these books has all written Graham Greene
"Evidently Graham Greene has written all
c. Nämä kirjat Graham Greene on (*kaikki) kirjoittanut (kaikki).

In (44a) a subject topic controls a preverbal floated quantifier. In (44b) an object topic controls a floated quantifier in what looks like the same position. (44c) shows that a phrase moved to specCP cannot control a quantifier in that position, although it can control a postverbal quantifier.[18]

We suggest the following explanation of why object topics exhibit this particular mix of so called A- and A-bar properties. Consider first agreement, arguably the smallest problem for the present theory: In Finnish as in many other languages the verb can agree only with a nominative argument, hence can never agree with an object even if that object is in specFP. We may assume, following Holmberg and Platzack (1995), that the reason is that AgrS is inherently nominative in the languages in question, hence can be checked only by a nominative category. We return later to the mechanism which ensures that the phi-features and the case of the subject are checked even when the subject remains in VP.

Now consider binding and reconstruction: What object movement to specFP has in common with wh-movement or contrast movement to specCP is that they are all movements from a case-position to a non-case-position. In other words, the case of the moved category is checked in the launching site, not in the landing site. By contrast, movement of the nominative subject to specFP is movement to a case-checking position.[19] Now assume that the only member of an A-chain which is visible for Binding Theory is the member in the case-checking position.[20] It follows that the subject will bind an anaphor from specFP (or specTP; see footnote 21), and is not reconstructible from SpecFP (or specTP), while the object can bind an anaphor only from its case-checking position inside VP, and must be reconstructed to that position if it contains an anaphor.

Consider Quantifier Float: The object in specFP can control a floated quantifier because that relation does not fall under Binding Theory, but movement. Following Sportiche (1988) and much subsequent work we assume that Quantifier Float is derived by movement of a DP out of a QP headed by the quantifier. The position of the quantifer is thus either the base-position of the QP, or a position to which the QP has moved before being stranded by the DP. We will see below that an object moved out of VP need not move all the way to SpecFP, but may be realized in a position between specFP and VP. We are therefore not surprised to find that a floated quantifier may occur in such a position: We assume the quantifier and its complement DP have moved to a position outside VP but lower than SpecFP, where the quantifier is stranded while the DP moves on on to SpecFP. Why movement to specCP cannot proceed in two steps in this way remains an open question, though.[21]

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[18] Another test for A/A-bar-hood familiar from the literature is whether the category in question licenses a parasitic gap. Unfortunately this test cannot be used in Finnish since Finnish has null objects, and there is no simple way of distinguishing a parasitic gap from a null object.

[19] This is so on the assumption that nominative case is checked by F. Alternatively it is checked by T. Subject movement to specFP is then formally distinct from object movement to specFP in that the former is movement to a phi-feature-checking position. The explanation of the binding and reconstruction effects in the text below still holds.

[20] This follows if Binding Theory sees only phi-features, and case is a phi-feature, hence always moves together with the phi-features.

Finally, the absence of any interaction between movement to specCP and movement to specFP follows within the movement theory of Chomsky (1995: ch, 4). According to Chomsky, movement is triggered by Attraction: a feature F attracts a matching feature F' from downstairs, triggering movement of F' (pied piping an entire category in the case of overt movement) to the checking domain of F (with subsequent checking and erasure of either F or F', as the case may be). As dictated by the MLC, the attractor F will always attract the closest instance of F' in its c-command domain, and will not see any other features. A number of standard Relativized Minimality effects follow from this condition, including superiority, wh-island effects and at least some HMC-effects. Now assume that wh-movement is triggered by a [WH]-feature in C attracting a [WH] feature from downstairs. The presence of an object (or subject) in specFP will have no effect, except if the object (or subject) has the feature [WH], in which case it will itself be moved, blocking movement of a lower category. Assume that movement of a contrasted category to specCP is likewise triggered by a feature [Contrast] in C. Again presence of an object (or subject) in specFP will have no effect unless the object (or subject) is marked [Contrast].

6. Expletives and argument structure

In this section we will discuss the expletive *sitä*, in particular as it appears in the 'Multiple Subject Construction' (MSC). We will show

(a) that *sitä* is a pure expletive in Chomsky's 1995 sense. In other words, it has no phi-features and is thus not directly involved in any case- or agreement checking. It is also not a place-holder for the subject. Its function is just to check the EPP-feature.

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[21] Guilfoyle, Hung & Travis observe a similar cluster of properties associated with the topic in a group of related Austronesian languages (Malagasy, Cebuano, Tagalog, and Bahasa Indonesia and Malaysia), notorious for their topic-orientedness. They argue that the topic NP, whether subject or object, is in SpecIP in these languages. They observe that a topic can always control Quantifier Float, but only a subject can bind anaphora. They assume that while Quantifier Float is controlled from specIP, i.e. it is determined by the S-structure configuration, anaphor binding is controlled strictly from specVP. In other words, no movement, not even A-movement will affect binding relations. There are classical arguments against the latter hypothesis though (as a universal), for instance (i), where binding presupposes raising.

(i) They seem to each other [t to have gone mad].

(b) The position of *sitä* is specFP (with one minor exception).

61. Sitä is not nominative

The following is a list of constructions exhibiting the expletive *sitä*:

(45) ***The Partitive Construction**:*
sitä leikkii lapsia pihalla
EXP plays children+PART in-yard
'there are children playing in the yard'

(46) ***Passive**:*
sitä väsytään nykyään helpommin kuin ennen
EXP get-tired+PASS nowadays easier than before
'these days people get tired easier than before'

(47) ***The Generic Subject Construction**:*
sitä väsyy nykyään helpommin kuin ennen
EXP gets-tired nowadays easier than before
'One gets tired these days easier than before'

(48) ***The Multiple Subject Construction***
sitä ovat nämä lapset jo oppineet uimaan
EXP have these children already learnt to-read
'these children have already learnt to read'

Morphologically *sitä* is the partitive form of the 3rd person singular pronoun, the nominative form of which is *se*. As a referential pronoun it is used to refer to non-human as well as (colloquially) human referents of both genders. We claim that *sitä* in the expletive constructions is a pure expletive in the sense of Chomsky (1995) which is to say that it does not head a chain, does not have nominative case, and (hence) does not control agreement. It also does not have any privileged relation to the subject. Its function is just to overtly fill the specFP position in constructions where there is no lexical filler of that position, i.e. formally to check the EPP-feature in F. All the constructions (45)-(48) are ungrammatical if the expletive is left out, unless an argument or adverbial is moved to the initial position, as discussed in section 3.

According to an influential tradition the function of expletives such as *there* in English is to check nominative case; see Groat (1995) for a recent exponent of this view. The obligatory insertion of the expletive in specIP (that is specTP in most recent theories) in constructions without a lexical nominative subject in specIP would then at least in part follow from Case theory: Nominative must be checked in specIP. In the case of Finnish there are extremely good reasons to reject this theory:[22]
(a) As we have seen, nominative case need not be checked in specIP; instead specIP, or more precisely specFP, may host a nonnominative category. Hence the position of *sitä* is no indication that it is nominative
(b) *Sitä* does not control agreement . See for instance (48), where the finite verb is plural, agreeing with the lower subject. As discussed in the preceding section, only a nominative NP can control agreement.
(c) The morphological form of *sitä* indicates that it is not nominative. In fact the nominative form *se* of the same pronoun is used as an expletive, too, namely (colloquially) in weather constructions.

(49) Nyt se taas sataa.
now it again rains

This form is impossible in the expletive constructions listed above:

(50) *Se leikkii lapsia pihalla
it plays children+PART in-yard
(51) *Se väsytään nykyään helpommin kuin ennen
it get-tired+PASS nowadays easier than before
(52) (*)Se väsyy nykyään helpommin kuin ennen.
it gets-tired nowadays easier than before
(53) *Se ovat nämä lapset jo oppineet uimaan
it have these children already learnt to-read

(52) is grammatical if the pronoun is interpreted referentially, meaning “It /he/she gets tired more easily than before”. If the function of the expletive in (45)-(48) is to check nominative case in specIP, why not use the nominative form of the pronoun? The choice of form rather indicates that

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[22] If the AgrS-features in English are not capable of checking nominative case, then presumably *there* checks nominative case in English existential and other constructions with *there*. That is to say, we do not agree with Chomsky (1995: ch. 4) that English *there* is a pure expletive.

the expletive crucially should *not* be nominative, checking nominative case in specIP. A nominative pronoun in that position apparently can only be interpreted referentially (shown most clearly by (52)), consequently it competes with the other arguments for the theta roles assigned by the predicate, leading to a violation of the Theta Criterion. The non-nominative partitive pronoun, on the other hand, can be interpreted nonreferentially, hence does not impinge on Theta-role assignment. We claim that *sitä* as an expletive, in spite of its partitive form, is formally caseless: the form is partitive because partitive is the default oblique (i.e. nonnominative) case in Finnish.[23] The reason why the nominative pronoun can be used in (49), we contend, is that in that construction no theta-role is assigned. Therefore, although the subject is nominative, it does not compete with any other argument for a theta-role. Effectively, it heads a vacuous chain, i.e. a chain with case but no theta-role.[24]

In conclusion, there is virtually no empirical support for the hypothesis that expletive *sitä* checks nominative case, and that its obligatory character can be explained by Case theory.

The fact that the expletive pronoun is morphologically partitive is thought-provoking against the background of the 'partitive hypothesis', according to which a postverbal argument in existential and ergative constructions has (abstract) partitive case; see Belletti (1989). Lasnik (1995) presents a version of the partitive hypothesis in which the English expletive *there* crucially takes a partitive nominal as its associate, serving as a host for this argument in LF. Lasnik does not explicitly propose that *there* itself is partitive, but such an analysis would in fact be fully consistent with his theory. Plausibly, if the expletive is in a chain with a partitive argument it must itself either be partitive or caseless, since otherwise a case clash would ensue. Now in Finnish there is a common construction where the expletive cooccurs with a postverbal partitive argument , namely (45), the so called Partitive Construction. However, there are other constructions where the expletive *sitä* cooccurs with arguments which are not partitive: In for instance (48) the 'associate' of the expletive, i.e. the argument whose place in the overt structure is in a sense occupied by *sitä*, is nominative, and, as will be seen below, the associate may in principle have any case at all.

6.2. *Argument positions in IP and the position of the expletive*

In this subsection we will argue for the hypotheses in (54):

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[23] See Vainikka (1993) for arguments that partitive is the default object case.

[24] This does not rule out use of *sitä* in weather constructions, correctly, since (i) is a viable alternative to (54):

(i) Nyt sitä taas sataa.
now EXP again rains

(54) a. The expletive *sitä* is always in Spec(FP).
b. If specFP is occupied by an expletive, a lexical argument (subject or nonsubject) can stay in the spec of any available category between F and VP.

If *sitä* is in SpecFP it should be the case that it can be preceded by at most one constituent, which should have a contrastive reading. The following examples show that this is the case.

(55) a. Pihalla sitä leikkii lapsia
in-yard EXPL plays children+PART
'IN THE YARD, it seems, there are children playing'

b. Nykyään sitä väsytään helpommin kuin ennen
nowadays EXPL get-tired+PASS easier than before
'THESE DAYS people get tired easier than before'

c. Helpommin sitä nykyään väsyy kuin ennen
easier EXPL gets-tired nowadays than before
'I tell you, these days one gets tired MUCH EASIER than before'

d. Nämä lapset sitä ovat jo oppineet uimaan
These children EXPL have already learnt to-swim
'Look at these children, they have already learnt to swim'

Almost any constituent can be moved to the left of the expletive, but -- apart from those sentence adverbials that can adjoin FP (or, in the case of certain adverbs, CP) -- only one constituent, and that constituent always has a contrastive reading.

Furthermore, if *sitä* is in specFP, and if our theory of Finnish sentence structure in section 2 is basically correct, *sitä* should always immediately precede the head bearing subject agreement (or in the case of passives, the head bearing the F-affix; see section 2), except if the head is itself moved to C. The following examples show that this is indeed the case. For expository purposes we use the same person (3PL, ending -*vAt*), same mood (conditional, ending - *isi*) in all the examples. We will notate the symbol of the relevant syntactic position (e.g. F, Spec(CP), etc.) above the word in that position. The following examples illustrate the generalization that the expletive always immediately precedes the element (negation, auxiliary, or verb) that is inflected for subject agreement whether or not that element is also inflected for tense.

(56) a. F T Ptc
Sitä eivät [nämä lapset]$_i$ olisi ikinä oppineet t_i uimaan
EXP not+3PL these children have+COND ever learn+PTC to-swim
'These children would never have learnt to swim'

b. SpecCP F T Ptc
[Nämä lapset]$_i$ sitä eivät t_i olisi ikinä oppineet t_i uimaan
these children EXP not+3PL have+COND ever learn+PTC to-swim
'These children, they would never have learnt to swim'

c. SpecCP F T Ptc
uimaan$_j$ sitä eivät [nämä lapset]$_i$ olisi ikinä oppineet t_i t_j
to-swim EXP not+3PL these children have+COND ever learn+PTC
'To SWIM, at least, these children would never have learnt'

d. F T Ptc
*sitä [nämä lapset] eivät olisi ikinä oppineet uimaan
EXP these children not+3PL have+COND ever learn+PTC to-swim

e. F T Ptc
*[Nämä lapset] eivät sitä olisi ikinä oppineet uimaan
These children not+3PL EXP have+COND ever learn+PTC to-swim

f. SpecCP F T Ptc
Uimaan sitä eivät olisi [nämä lapset] ikinä oppineet.
to-swim EXP not+3PL have+COND these children never learn+PTC

g. F T Ptc
Sitä eivät olisi [nämä lapset] ikinä oppineet uimaan
EXP not+3PL have+COND these children ever learn+PTC to-swim

h. F T
?Sitä eivät oppisi [nämä lapset] uimaan
EXP not+3PL learn+COND these children to-swim

i. F T
Uimaan sitä eivät [nämä lapset] oppisi
to-swim EXP not+3PL these children learn+COND
‘TO SWIM, at least, these children would not learn’

j. F T
?Uimaan sitä eivät oppisi [nämä lapset]
to-swim EXP not+3PL learn+COND these children

k. F Ptc
sitä olisivat [nämä lapset] oppineet uimaan
EXP have+COND+3PL these children learn+PTC to-swim
'These children would have learnt to swim'

l. SpecCP F Ptc
[Nämä lapset] sitä olisivat oppineet uimaan
These children EXP have+COND+3PL learn+PTC to-swim
'THESE CHILDREN/These children would have learnt to swim'

m. C F Ptc
Olisivat$_i$ sitä t$_i$ [nämä lapset] oppineet uimaan
have+COND+3PL EXP these children learn+PTC to-swim
'These children WOULD have learnt to swim'

n. SpecCP F Ptc
*Olisivat$_i$ sitä t$_i$ oppineet [nämä lapset] uimaan
have+COND+3PL EXP learn+PTC these children to-swim

If the expletive is itself unambiguously in the contrast position (as in (56d)) or below F (as in (56e), the sentence is ungrammatical. The conclusion is, almost inevitably, that the expletive can only be in specFP.

In section 3 we mentioned the fact that an expletive cannot co-occur with a referential null-subject (as observed by Auli Hakulinen (1975), who gave the following example).

(57) *Sitä uskon vallankumoukseen.
EXP believe+1SG revolution+ILL
'I believe in revolution.'

This is explained if subject *pro* and the expletive *sitä* are both confined to specFP. In that case *pro* is impossible in (57), and the sentence is ruled out by the theta criterion. That subject *pro* is confined to specFP is a consequence of the identification requirement on small *pro*: The features of *pro* can be identified only in a spec-head relation with F, since F is the head hosting the required AgrS-features.

The following is an important exception to the generalization that the expletive always precedes the head bearing subject agreement: When specCP or C is filled, V-movement, otherwise obligatory, becomes optional: see Vilkuna (1989, 1995), Holmberg (1997c, to appear). As a result such sentences are often verb final. This is exemplified in (58)

(58) a. Nähtävästi Pekka **matkustaa** huomenna Pariisiin.
apparently Pekka travel+3SG tomorrow to-Paris
b. *Nähtävästi Pekka huomenna Pariisiin **matkustaa**.
c. Huomennako Pekka Pariisiin **matkustaa**?
Tomorrow+Q Pekka to-Paris travel+3SG
"Is it tomorrow that Pekka is going to Paris?"

The initial adverb, which is adjoined to FP, is added in (58a,b) in order to prevent an analysis where the subject is moved to specCP, which would make possible leaving the verb in situ. According to Holmberg (1997b) the order in (58c) is the result of non-movement of the main verb, made possible by filling of C; although the initial adverbial is by hypothesis in specCP, C is filled in this construction by a focus feature realized (or checked) by the question affix -kO. Not only the main verb, but also the negation and the auxiliary can be left in situ when C is thus filled; see Holmberg (1997b, to appear) for two quite different ways of explaining this phenomenon. As a result, when C is filled, we may find material intervening between the expletive *sitä* and the head bearing subject agreement. We have seen one example already in this section, namely (56c). The following is another example:

(59) Milloin sitä nämä lapset olisivat uimaan oppineet?
when EXP these children would-have swim learned
"When would these children have learned to swim?"

This is significant in the present context, since it shows that the expletive need not be in the spec of an overt head bearing subject agreement. In other words, there is no PF-condition which requires a spec-head relation or an adjacency relation between *sitä* and the head containing AgrS. However, when the expletive does immediately precede a head in PF, the head is always F, containing AgrS (or in passives, the F-affix). Therefore we maintain that *sitä* is is in SpecFP in the verb final constructions, too, except that F in those cases is phonetically empty.

There is one case where the expletive *sitä* is (arguably) in a position higher than specFP: In some cases *sitä* may serve as a carrier of the question particle -kO or the 'focus-particle' -hAn.

(60) a. Sitäkö ovat teidän lapset jo kaikki käyneet uimassa?
EXP-Q have your children already all been swimming
'Have your children already all been swimming?'
b. Sitähän ei nykyään puhuta vakoilusta.
EXP-PRTCL not nowadays talk-PASS espionage-ABL
We don't talk about espionage these days, do we?

Yes-no questions in Finnish involve a question affix -kO, affixed onto a constituent moved to specCP, which thereby becomes the focus of the question. In the unmarked case the finite verb is fronted, to serve as host of the affix. In that case the event itself is, in a sense, the question focus. However, if the sentence is headed by an expletive, the expletive may serve as the host, in which case the reading is equally unmarked: the event is focus. Thus while (61a) can be pragmatically equivalent to (60a), (61b) and (61c) cannot; the latter two have focus on the subject and the complement, respectively.

(61) a. Ovatko sitä teidän lapset jo kaikki käyneet uimassa?
have-Q EXP your children already all been swimming

b. Teidän lapsetko sitä ovat jo kaikki käyneet uimassa?
your children-Q EXP have already all been swimming
c. Uimassako sitä teidän lapset ovat jo kaikki käyneet?
swimming-Q EXP your children have already all been

In (66) fronting of *sitä*, and in (61a) fronting of the finite verb is triggered by (some version of) the 'Stranded Affix Filter' of Lasnik (1981).

We conclude that the expletive *sitä* occupies specFP, the topic position, in constructions which do not have an overt topic. Assuming as we do, that the function of the expletive is to check the EPP-feature, we are led to conclude that the EPP-feature is in F, not for instance in T. The EPP feature in F is checked by an argument which is usually but not always the subject, or by the expletive *sitä*.. In this sense *sitä* is not an expletive subject but an expletive topic: It satisfies the requirement that a given sentence-initial spec-position, namely specFP, be filled in sentences where, for whatever reasons, that position is not filled by an argument. That position is not a privileged position for the subject, though, but for the topic. This claim will be further substantiated in the following section.

6.3 More on the MSC

As we have seen, there is a construction where the expletive *sitä* co-occurs with a VP-external argument lower down in the structure. In the examples discussed so far the lower argument is the subject, so that the structure looks very much like the Multiple Subject Constructions found in some Germanic languages, for example Icelandic:

(62) Thadh hafa margir stúdentar lesidh thessa bók
EXP have many students read this book

Bobaljik and Jonas (1996) have argued that the expletive in this construction is in specAgrS and the lexical subject in specTP. Crucially B&S show that the lexical subject is not in specVP, but has raised to a higher spec-position in the IP-domain, which B&S identify as specTP. Following Chomsky (1993), B&S assume that T checks nominative case. Hence the nominative subject has to enter into a checking relation with T at some point in the derivation. In some languages, for instance English, T raises to AgrS, and the subject raises to the spec of the T-AgrS complex checking nominative case (all in overt syntax). In other languages, for instance Icelandic, the subject moves via specTP to specAgrS, checking nominative on the way.

In Icelandic only the subject can move to specTP in the MSC: Icelandic is subject-prominent, in spite of having subject agreement which is rich enough to check nominative case (according to Holmberg and Platzack 1995).[25] What about Finnish, a topic-prominent language with a MSC? It turns out that the lexical argument in the Finnish MSC need not be the subject — which is to say that 'MSC' is actually a misnomer.

(63) a. Sitä en niitä lapsia ole nähnyt minäkään.
EXPL not+1SG those kids have seen I+even
'Even I haven't seen those kids.'
b. Sitä ei tällaista kirjaa olisi voinut kirjoittaa kukaan muu kuin Graham Greene.
EXP not such book would-have been-able-to write anyone else but G.G.
'No-one but Graham Greene could have written a book this this.'
c. Nyt sitä ovat tämän kirjan lukeneet kaikki neljännen luokan oppilaat.
now EXP have this book read all 4th grade students
'Now all the 4th grade students have read this book'

In these constructions the object is raised out of VP while the nominative subject remains in VP. The expletive is in its usual position, that is specFP, immediately preceding the head bearing subject agreement (the negation or auxiliary). That the position of the expletive is indeed specFP can be established by applying the same tests as above in (56). The object is thus in a lower spec-position in the IP-domain. The verb agrees with the nominative subject, not with the object.

Let us assume, provisionally, that the position of the preverbal argument in the Finnish MSC is specTP. In that case we have to accept that specTP, just like specFP, is not a privileged position for the subject: Some languages have the option of moving other categories than the subject to specTP.

The question is, which feature triggers movement of the object to specTP in (63), and the subject in (61), on the natural assumption that the trigger in both cases is the same? The nominative case-feature of T (assuming for the sake of argument that it is in T) cannot attract a nonnominative object. The EPP-feature which attracts a [-Foc] argument cannot be responsible either, for two reasons: (a) it is satisfied in these constructions by the expletive in specFP, and (b) the lexical subject in (61) and the object in (63) is not [-Foc]:

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[25] Icelandic is not 'nominative-prominent', though, since a nonnominative argument may move to specTP and specFP, as long as it is a subject in the sense of being the highest argument; cf. Holmberg and Platzack (1995).

A [-Foc] argument is referential, specific, refers to an entity previously introduced in the discourse, and is not information focus. Hence the most typical linguistic expression defined by the feature [-Foc] is an unstressed definite pronoun. But the argument in specTP in the Finnish MSC cannot be an unstressed definite pronoun. A pronoun in that position either has to be stressed or (preferably) construed with a focus particle.[26]

(64) a. Sitä olen *minä /MINÄ/ minäkin/jopa minä jo monta kertaa käynyt Pariisissa.
EXP have-1SG I/ I (stress)/ I-too/ even I already many times been in-Paris
b. Sitä ovat *sen/??SEN/senkin jo lukeneet kaikki neljännen luokan oppilaat.
EXP have it/IT/it-too already read all fourth grade students

The fronted argument need also not be specific:

(65) Sitä voi kuka tahansa heti tulla puhumaan meille.
EXP can who ever at-once come talk to-us
'Anyone can come at once and talk to us.'

The Finnish MSC differs markedly from the Icelandic MSC in that there is no definiteness effect in the Finnish MSC of the sort exhibited by the Icelandic MSC (see Vangsnes 1995, this volume): in Finnish the argument in specTP can be definite. However, like the corresponding argument in Icelandic it must be focused, either by contrastive focus or by virtue of being information focus, with or without focus particles. So we are talking about movement to a preverbal focus position. This is reminiscent of movement to the preverbal focus position in Hungarian and certain other languages (cf. Kiss 1995), although there are obvious differences; for one thing this movement is optional in Finnish.

Consider now the question of landing site for the argument moved in the MSC. We have provisionally assumed, following Bobaljik and Jonas's (1996) analysis of the Icelandic MSC, that the argument lands in specTP. In fact the position of the argument relative to other constituents in the IP-domain is quite free. Compare for instance (66a,b,c,d):

(66) a. F T Ptc
Sitä eivät **nämä lapset** olisi ikinä oppineet uimaan

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[26] Finnish unstressed pronouns do not have any special distributional characteristics, such as occurring in designated clitic or weak pronoun positions.

EXP not+3PL these children have+COND ever learn+PTC to-swim
'These children would never have learnt to swim'

b. F T Ptc
Sitä eivät olisi **nämä lapset** ikinä oppineet uimaan
EXP not+3PL have+COND these children ever learn+PTC to-swim

c. F T Ptc
Sitä eivät olisi ikinä **nämä lapset** oppineet uimaan
EXP not+3PL have+COND ever these children learn+PTC to-swim

F T Ptc
d. Sitä eivät olisi oppineet **nämä lapset** ikinä uimaan
EXP not+3PL have+COND learn+PTC these children ever to-swim

F T Ptc
e. Sitä eivät olisi oppineet ikinä **nämä lapset** uimaan
EXP not+3PL have+COND learn+PTC ever these children to-swim

Crucially, in each of these positions the lexical argument must be focus: a nonfocused argument is excluded. But apparently there is not a structurally defined focus-position to the right of F in Finnish; instead there appears to be a focus domain, stretching from F down to the bottom of VP. That is to say, the focus domain is not VP (as we provisionally assume earlier), but TP, F demarcating what we might call the topic domain, and C, as before, the operator domain. It looks like the distribution of focused arguments inside the focus domain is essentially free. As long as the EPP-feature and the nominative Case feature in F are checked, the former by movement to specFP or merge of an expletive, and the latter by head-adjunction to F, and as long as the order of the functional heads (F-Neg-T-Aux-Prc-Pass) is respected, as well as the order of adverbs (cf. Holmberg & al. 1993) the positioning of focused arguments inside TP is free.[27] [28] What is the exact structural position of the argument in each case? The analysis of the Finnish finite clause given in (4) is rich enough to accommodate (66a,b,c), assuming that every head has a spec-position available for a focused argument. For (66d) we would have to postulate one more head between Ptc and V. This could be *v* as in Chomsky (1995) or the head Act/Pass in Holmberg & Platzack (1995). We leave open the exact analysis of the constructions in (66); the main point is that the position of the focused preverbal argument relative to the other preverbal constituents is essentially free between F and V.

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[27] Cf. Vilkuna's (1989) claim that while specCP (Vilkuna's K-position) and specIP (Vilkuna's T-position) are fixed, constituent order in the VP-domain is free, where Vilkuna's VP-domain corresponds at least in part to our TP-domain.

[28] The position of nonfocused arguments inside the focus domain is not free, however. The generalization concerning arguments marked [-Foc] is that they must either move to specFP or be governed by (= be a complement of) the main verb or some other lexical head (such as an

The MSC and multiple specifiers

Chomsky (1995: ch. 4) argues that a head can have as many specifiers as it has features licensing them: the so called multiple spec hypothesis. In this way Chomsky can abolish Agr as a separate head projecting its own phrase. Chomsky notes that the Icelandic MSC looks like a case where multiple specs are not allowed, since the two subjects are always separated by a head, namely the finite verb, indicating that they must each be licensed by a separate head, where furthermore the higher head is arguably AgrS. Chomsky suggests that the head movement to the position between the two subjects in the Icelandic MSC is an effect of the V2 condition, which, he speculates, is a PF condition.

In the Finnish MSC, too, a head always intervenes between the two 'subjects', i.e. the expletive and the preverbal lexical argument , where furthermore the head always bears the finite inflection, either subject agreement or, in passives, the corresponding invariant finite inflection, but not necessarily Tense or any other verbal inflection. Finnish is not a V2 language (for instance wh-movement does not induce V-movement to C), and there is no particular reason to think that the obligatory movement of the head bearing the finite inflection to the position right-adjacent to the higher subject is a PF-rule. The finite head does not move to the position right-adjacent to the higher specifier in the MSC because it is a MSC, but because it always moves to that position (except in the case discussed in section 6.2, where the otherwise obligatorily overt movement of the finite head to F is rendered optional, conditioned by the contents of C). Furthermore, if we are right, the two specifiers are in distinct syntactic domains: the higher one is in the topic-domain, outside the predicate phrase (i.e. TP), while the lower one is always inside the predicate phrase, and is therefore [+Foc]-marked. Given that specifiers of the same head are

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adposition). This entails that a subject marked [-Foc] must always move to specFP, while an object marked [-Foc] has the option of staying in situ; cf. Holmberg (1999).

necessarily in the same syntactic domain, the two specifiers in the MSC cannot be specifiers of the same head.

One question which we have not touched on yet is how agreement is ensured between the finite verb and the subject when the subject does not itself move to specFP? Following Chomsky (1995: ch. 4) we assume that the phi-features of the subject move covertly, i.e. without pied-piping the phonological and other features of the subject, adjoining to F (the binding facts mentioned in footnote 19 can be construed as evidence in favour of this analysis), entering a checking relation with the features of the finite inflection (leaving open the precise character of this relation). Why, however, does the finite verb agree with the subject in that case? Why does it not agree with the object topic moved to specFP? In other words, why is (67) ill-formed:

(67) *Nämä kirjat ovat lukeneet minäkin.
these books have-3PL read-PL I-too-NOM

We hypothesize that the reason is that (a) Case and phi-features are part of the same, indivisible feature complex in Finnish (and probably in Germanic, too), and (b) F has a nominative-checking feature. Therefore F will never attract a nonnominative verb, and the finite verb will therefore never agree with a nonnominative argument. There are topic-prominent languages where the finite verb regularly agrees with the topic, as is apparently the case in some Bantu languages; cf. Jang (1997), Bresnan (1994). We suggest that agreement is a different sort of category in these languages, in particular we suggest that it is dissociated from Case.

Many questions are still left unanswered. For instance, why don’t other languages, for instance English, French, Swedish, etc. have MSCs? It is tempting to see the possibility of MSCs in Finnish as a consequence of the visible Agr-T split. See Thrainsson (1996) for arguments to the effect that some languages but not others have I split in Agr and T, and that MSCs can be expected only in languages where I is split: One subject would then be licensed by AgrS and the other by T. In Finnish the higher subject does bear a special relation to subject agreement, as we have seen, although the relation is indirect. On the other hand there seems to be no obvious connection between T and the lower subject; we have shown that the position of the lower subject is essentially free, in the predicate-internal IP-domain.

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